

Eliminating Syphilis

Guilford County (Greensboro), North Carolina

Why is Syphilis Elimination in the U.S. within or reach now?

- Syphilis is a preventable and curable sexually transmitted disease (STD).
- Infectious syphilis is at the lowest rate ever reported: 2.6 cases/100,000 population (6,993 total cases).
- Syphilis is now very concentrated; half of all new cases in 1998 were reported from only 28 counties, which represent less than 1% of all U.S. counties.
- Other industrialized countries have already eliminated syphilis.

Why is it Important to Eliminate Syphilis in Guilford County?

- **In 1998 Guilford County ranked 13th in the nation** in new cases of infectious syphilis (98 cases) and had a rate 10 times higher than the national rate.

- **To reduce one of the most glaring racial disparities in health**

S 85% of cases are among African Americans (79% of cases nationally).

S The infectious syphilis rate in Guilford County for African Americans is 18 times greater than the rate for white Americans.

- **To decrease spread of HIV infection**

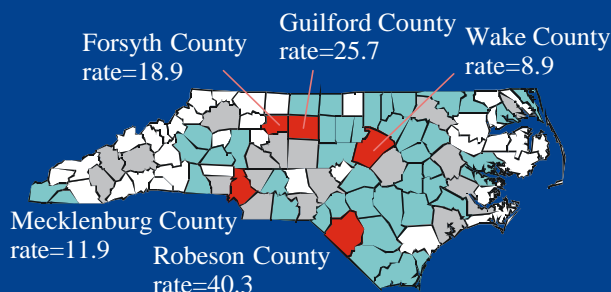
S Syphilis increases HIV transmission at least 2-to-5 fold.

- **To improve infant health**

S Syphilis can be transmitted from mother to fetus during pregnancy causing stillbirths or congenital infection, some of which may result in persistent health problems.

S In 1998, 3 cases of congenital syphilis were reported from Guilford County for a rate of 57.3 cases/100,000 births, nearly 3 times greater than the national rate of 20.6 cases/100,000 births.

Infectious Syphilis — North Carolina, 1998



Guilford County Responds

- STD Action Group is a community group composed of representatives from the county health department, community-based organizations, local jail, faith community, housing projects, and private health sector that assists in syphilis elimination activities.
- A Rapid Ethnographic Community Assessment Process (RECAP) was conducted in February 1998. Interventions implemented as a result of this process appear to be a contributing factor to a 34% decline in infectious syphilis between 1997 and 1998.

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